

# Photography Can Aid the Greenkeeper

By ARTHUR LANGTON

Most greenkeepers have access to a camera of some sort, and a good few have dark rooms in which they pursue photography as a hobby, but mighty few list either as a professional aid in their daily work. Nevertheless, photography, supported by the art and manipulative skill usually acquired in grade school, can provide the greenkeeper with a means of easing his tasks and elevating his status.

Photography can do these things for the greenkeeper: (1) Provide a graphic "log" of conditions subject to gradual change; (2) record the state of things immediately before a major change in the golfing landscape; (3) forecast the finished appearance of planned changes; (4) present an understandable layout for certain routine work; and (5) provide a means of acquiring merit in the eyes of his employers. Professionals and house managers, too, can use photography advantageously, but this article will concern itself with the greenkeeper and some of his myriad problems.

Consider the first item in the outline above, that of providing a graphic log of conditions subject to gradual change. How many times has every greenkeeper tried to estimate the progress of a weedy army upon an unsullied green or virgin fairway? How often has he pondered the relative

worth of various treatments against seasonal afflictions? And how frequently has he wondered about the amount of material that erosion carries away from the sides or bottoms of waterways? The simplest kind of photography will provide an excellent record in all of these cases. On occasion these pictures will prove that either his fears are groundless or that he had better shake the lead out and do something while he still has a golf course. Either way, the picture will have proved invaluable.

## Permanent Visual Record

Season-by-season pictures of critical areas provide a very pleasing record of growth, progress, destruction, or decay. Further, they do not vary with changes in personnel and—aye—with the breakdown of the greenkeeper's mental processes.

Golf courses blessed, or cursed, with trees and shrubbery need an annual record of growth. Tree branches and shrubs slowly and imperceptibly encroaching upon a fairway or green can make a difference of several strokes to the average score over a period of years. Photographs, of course, provide the best record of growth and form the basis for determining a standard set of playing conditions (see picture). Pictures can eliminate a major and unsightly logging job made necessary every few years by someone realizing that the growth which once made a sporting hole has finally made an unfair test of golf. The pictures enable the greenkeeper to trim the trees in conformity with a predetermined set of conditions with a comparatively small and unobtrusive amount of work. On at least one golf course such a practice would do much to heal the breach between the tree-loving and the non-tree-loving golfers.

Those golf course operators who dote on trees can use photographs to some extent to detect less-than-normal growth in a particular tree, and thus be forewarned to make a replacement possibly years before the actual demise (see top photo page 102).

The second way in which photography can aid the greenkeeper, by recording conditions in a given area before a major change is made in its landscape, has several interesting angles. Some golf courses—and a few greenkeepers should have lived so long to know it—undergo cyclical changes. A few photographs would do wonders for posterity when some contemporary bright

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The white lines indicate the limits to which the foliage must be trimmed so as to maintain a standard set of playing conditions. Periodic reference to this photograph will enable the greenkeeper in charge to keep the branches in bounds with a small and inconspicuous amount of trimming at regular intervals.

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mind comes up with the idea of reconstructing a hole along the lines it occupied decades before. A few photographs in the archives would be worth their weight in uranium in helping to restore the status quo.

### Pictures Supplement Blueprints

Then, too, a more everyday reason exists for picturing conditions prior to major face liftings. Subterranean items such as water mains, valves, drainage lines, and other utilities have a habit of getting buried and forgotten during the creative excitement of Big Changes. These utilities outlined on the face of a suitable photograph (a job much simpler than preparing a mess of blueprints) would eliminate a lot of future random excavating.

The third photographic consideration, that of forecasting the appearance of planned changes, involves a little more than straight photography, or picture snapping. Suppose the powers-that-be demand trees along a given fairway. Okay, give 'em trees ahead of time by snapping pictures of trees approximately the size of the planned ones 5 or 10 years hence. Cut these pictures out and paste them in place on a photograph of the fairway involved. A reasonable amount of regard for proportion and perspective will heighten the illusion of a peep into the future. This paste-up may serve to support or condemn the proposed change. In the latter case, shifting or eliminating a paper tree has it all over doing the same thing to a real one which has had a chance to get a firm grip in the terrain. Sketching the proposed trees in by hand on the fairway photograph will give less realistic, but none the less effective portrayal. The same methods will picture the placement of traps, grassy hol-

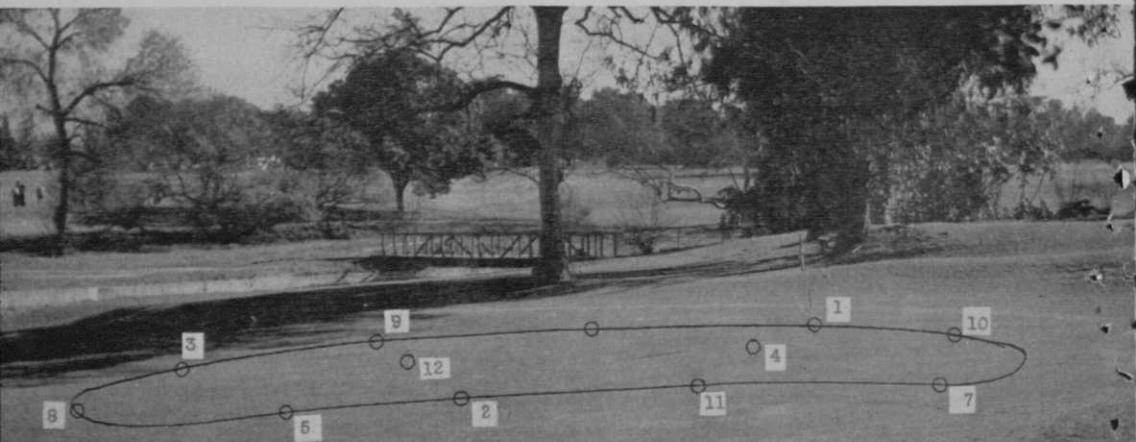


Yes, golf balls can kill an oak tree. This centuries-old live oak is slowly dying from the effects of the battering it has been receiving. Walter E. Langton points to the ball pits which cause the damage. Photography can record the decline of such trees.

lows, and all the other more-or-less transient geographical features which greenkeepers have to add to and subtract from golf courses. Thus pictured, some of the more awful of proposed changes may reveal themselves in their true light before the final damage occurs, thus leading to modification or elimination of the original plan.

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The greenkeeper can lay out a system of hole changes on a photograph as shown here. The system can apply to all greens on the course, or can be modified to suit individual greens.



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The fourth method employs photography to present an understandable layout of certain routine work. For instance, if the greenkeeper decides to have cup changes made systematically rather than leaving them to the haphazard choice of an indifferent greensman, photographs can help. A picture of a typical green with the routine of cup changes marked thereon and the whole posted where the grounds crew can refer to it readily will put the whole matter upon a documentary basis (see page 102). If photographs can be taken from a suitable elevation so as to allow proposed boundary markers, sprinkler systems, fairway limits, and gallery ropes to be marked thereon, the need for constant on-the-spot supervision by the superintendent will diminish.

Fifthly and finally, photographs offer the greenkeeper a tangible means towards an intangible end; that of elevating himself in the esteem of his employers. Photographs which show progress of work, the need for attention to a specific task, the feasibility of a change in procedure, or evidence of time and labor saved cannot help but prove to the governing body that in the greenkeeper who can present such clearcut evidence they have a very thorough fellow indeed.

Now as to equipment. Scorn not the humble box camera, a device capable of taking a much better picture in the hands

of a beginner than much more elaborate equipment. At least one famous photographer delights in taking prize-winning photographs with a box camera. The family Brownie will serve to take acceptably well all of the types of photographs discussed in this paper. Of course, if the greenkeeper can master a more complicated camera, superior results may justify its purpose. Generally speaking, beware of the miniature, which provides negatives too small for retouching and their prints must all be enlarged.

A 4 x 5 view camera on a sturdy tripod probably represents the ideal in golf course equipment. Simple to operate, it will take a relatively large amount of abuse. Equipped with a lens of good definition and adequate focal length (not less than 6 inches), it will take beautifully clear pictures with a minimum of gadgets.

Retouching negatives, mentioned above, has definite possibilities from the greenkeeper's standpoint. By means of opaque fluid, obtainable at any photo supply store, the operator can brush, pen, or rule in water mains, boundary lines, trees, traps, greens, and other items directly on the negative. The prints from this negative will show the sketched lines or areas as dead white. This is a fine way to make quantity lots of a photograph with a drawing on its face without going to the trouble of sketching on each print. The opaque lines on the negative will wash off under running water.

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A darkroom, while a handy addition to the photographic tool, is not essential to the successful employment of photography, provided that a local establishment will provide good and prompt developing and printing service. Indeed, in the complete absence of any photographic equipment, the need for photographs for any of the purposes outlined above can be great enough to justify employing a commercial photographer for the occasion. However, the greenkeeper should have clearly in mind just what pictures he wants, and how he wants them taken. He will find it advisable to discuss the whole project with the photographer before the latter gets to the course. Otherwise the photographer may go haywire on the pictorial possibilities of the layout and shoot off his weight in expensive 8 x 10's. Once properly briefed, he will produce valuable suggestions on angles and coverage.

One warning. Photography, a useful servant, has the insidious capacity to become a time- and money-wasting master. When the greenkeeper begins to spend more time on focuses than on fairways, more time on gadgets than on greens, then's the moment to drop the whole business. Don't give the bosses a chance to say, "Okay, Snappy, go peddle your pictures elsewhere!"

**NEW IRON AGE SPRAYERS**—New Iron Age engine-driven golf course sprayers, with 4-gallon, 2-cylinder vertical pumps, are now being produced by the A. B. Farquhar Co., York, Pa. Pressure for thorough penetration of spray material is provided by the 2-cylinder vertical pump, a new addition to the Iron Age line. Semi-enclosed with a 1¾ in. bore and a 1½ in. stroke, the pump delivers 4 gallons per minute at pressures up to 350 lbs. The pump is fitted with hardened non-magnetic displacement tubes for longer cup life. Special stainless steel, combined with an exclusive finishing process, makes the plunger tube finest obtainable. The pump's specially designed drive gear and pinion, completely enclosed and dust-tight, are cut on a precision gear generator to assure perfect meshing of teeth for exceptionally long life. An air-cooled 1¾ h.p. engine is used to drive the pump. Four models of the Golf Course utility Sprayers are now in production at Farquhar. Model 71A, push cart type, and Model 71B, with automobile or tractor hitch, have heavy duty steel tanks, in 50 to 125 gallon sizes, with intake strainer and propeller type agitator as standard equipment.

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